

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR THE TOKLAT BORROW MATERIAL PROCESSING SITE
Denali National Park and Preserve

The National Park Service (NPS) has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that evaluates establishing a gravel storage and processing site at the Toklat River floodplain. The proposed action includes: processing 7,500 cubic yards of gravel annually (already approved in the park's 1992 Gravel Acquisition Plan and EA); relocating the existing french drain discharge pipe; placing 750 lineal feet of concrete jersey barriers to contain the gravel piles and protect the wetlands area; placing an 8,000 gallon fuel tank within the maintenance compound; installing sheet piling to a depth of 8.7 feet below the maximum channel depth and parallel with the river to protect the 4.77 acre storage and processing area from flooding and erosion; and restoring the existing processing site at the Toklat River bridges.

A 15-day public review was conducted for this project. Three comments were received concerning the proposed project. No significant new issues were raised, and no changes have been made to the original environmental assessment.

The following alternatives were evaluated in the environmental assessment: no action, which continues the use of the existing processing and storage site at the Toklat River bridges; and the proposed action, which establishes a gravel storage and processing site at the Toklat River floodplain below the park road maintenance camp.

The NPS has determined that the proposed action can be implemented with no significant adverse effects to natural and cultural resources, as documented by the environmental assessment.

A 0.04 acre corridor of riparian wetlands will be disturbed to install a french drain discharge pipe. A maximum of 4.77 acres of floodplain will be disturbed at the processing site. Wildlife will likely avoid the processing and excavation area during operations, and could be temporarily displaced from their habitat. The placement of sheet piling could cause short-term temporary increases in turbidity in the Toklat River. Dust will be generated during the operations, creating minor, localized, short-term degradation of air quality in the Toklat area. Noise from the operation could temporarily disturb park visitors in the area and Toklat residents. The noise of the processing operations could deflect downstream into wilderness areas and intrude upon the solitude of the area. No impacts would occur to threatened or endangered species, historic or cultural resources, or subsistence uses.

The proposed action complies with the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and Executive Orders 11988 and 11990. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a permit for the project under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and permitted the use of 4.77 acres of floodplain below the ordinary high water mark for crusher operations and material stockpiling. They also approved the proposed relocation

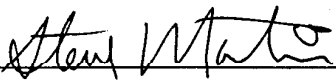
of the french drain discharge pipe in the 0.04 acre wetland area. In addition, they recommended the mitigation included in this EA, including the placement of concrete Jersey barriers and the placement of sheet piling to protect the stockpiles from erosion, to control sprawl, and to protect the processing area from river migration.

In addition to the placement of Jersey barriers and sheet piling, other mitigation will be adopted to minimize potential impacts: 1) the rock crusher is mobile and will be moved in the event of a changing channel or high water event, 2) the excavation and processing operations will be coordinated to occur in low or off-visitor use periods to minimize noise disturbance to visitors, and 3) if excavation, processing, and hauling operations occur during the visitor use season, they will be limited to non-peak hours.

There will be no significant restriction of subsistence activities as documented by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VII, Section 810(a) Summary Evaluation and Findings.

The proposed action does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), and environmental impact statement will not be prepared for this project.

Recommended:




Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve

10/20/99

Date

Approved:



Regional Director, Alaska Region

11/2/99

Date